



K-12 Education Coordination Full Council Meeting Minutes

**Location: Northern Cass School: 16021 18th St. SE Hunter, ND
& Virtually via Microsoft Teams
Friday, April 12 2024**

K-12 Council Members Present:

Chairman Luke Schaefer, Brandt Dick, Maria Neset, Jeremy Mehlhoff, Senator Ryan Braunberger, Jared Bollom, Melissa Vollmer, Sonia Meehl, Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck,

K-12 Council Members Present Virtually:

Alexis Baxley, Superintendent Kirsten Baesler, Jennifer Weber

K-12 Council Members Absent:

Sara Medalen, Beth Slette, Representative Pat Heinert, March Bluestone Sr., Nick Archuleta, Justin Fryer

Others Present: Kayla Effertz Kleven (Executive Director), Wayde Sick (NDCTE)

Others Present Virtually:

Aimee Copas (NDCEL), Shauna Marchus (NDDPI Admin), Donna Fishbeck (NDDPI Chief of Staff), Ellie Shockley (NDUS), Dawn Ulmer (NDCTE)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Luke Schaefer at 2:00 p.m.

Chair Schaefer began by thanking the Northern Cass team for letting the K12 Council tour with them and see real-world examples from the kids' point of view and participate in Biz town.

1. Approval of Meeting Previous Minutes: February 27, 2024

Melissa Vollmer moved to approve the minutes from the February 27, 2024 Full Council meeting. Maria Neset seconded the motion. No discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Governor's Teacher Recruitment & Retention Task Force Update

Maria Neset reported highlights from the most recent Teacher Recruitment & Retention Task Force meeting, which focused on teacher retention. She outlined information from experts who presented at the meeting, and summarized the information they contributed:

- Nathan Eklund, with Vital Network, shared the organization's focus in ND of supporting schools in building systems, frameworks, and processes to foster effective culture and climate, including incorporating teachers' voices.
- Erin Jacobson, ND Teacher Support System Coordinator, presented on the mentorship program. Maria Neset noted that data shared from the current study on retention shows evidence that having a devoted mentor has been proven to impact

- teacher retention.
- Sam Unruh, a data scientist with NDIR, presented data regarding teacher retention trends, including the age distribution of teachers and the motivations behind their departure from the field. Maria Neset noted that the data shows that the decision to leave the field is not always driven by higher pay but often revolves around working conditions.

Maria Neset stated that the task force members identified a significant gap in statewide data collection regarding teacher satisfaction and working conditions. This highlighted the need for a more comprehensive approach to gathering data statewide and the importance of consistency across all schools, to include all school positions.

Chair Schaefer mentioned that task force members have expressed concerns about the amount of work left to do in the remaining meetings scheduled and stated they are going to shift to subcommittees to delve further into topics while the task force waits for the next meeting to occur. Chair Schaefer mentioned that the K12 Council can support this work by exploring pertinent questions to enhance the task force's efforts at the next meeting.

Maria Neset added that the task force's also discussed the importance of supporting building principals and administrators to ensure they are informed, well-trained, and supported as they oversee and support teachers.

She reported that the afternoon session focused on strategic staffing and advanced licensure, with an interest in revisiting the Teacher In Leadership and Education (TILE) proposal. She stated that there was a discussion of how to incentivize and build a structure that retains high-quality teachers in the classroom, who are then elevated to a leadership role.

Maria Neset highlighted insights from Arizona's education workforce model and noted their unique approach to the design of the class day, classroom organization, and student assignments. She also mentioned presentations by Stephanie Dean regarding opportunity culture, and Lisa White regarding the whole school model. Maria Neset added that these models are a long-term commitment requiring intentional planning with increased teacher leadership and decreased administrator involvement.

Maria Neset concluded her summary of the meeting with an emphasis on the need to provide opportunities for collaboration between the state and local school districts to address challenges and implement innovative solutions. She stated that the final meeting will be in August. Maria Neset offered for the K12 Council to be included in an input session; and stated that she can add this Council to the calendar. She noted that there are other upcoming stakeholder listening sessions with teachers, administration, and school board members, as well as a public input session.

Wayde Sick asked if CTE teachers would be included in the input sessions. Maria Neset answered yes, and stated that she is meeting with task force members to discuss CTE and then meeting with Dr. Copas.

Representative Schreiber-Beck asked if college input has been included in this task force. Maria Neset answered that yes, Jenny Bladow, the director of the Office of Teacher Recruitment and Retention at UND, contributed from the Higher Education perspective and provided insights into trends in education field enrollment and the challenge of retaining teachers within the state. Maria stated that there was an acknowledgment of the decreasing trend in undergraduate

enrollment in education programs.

Further conversation was held amongst the group regarding the importance of preparedness for teachers in today's classrooms and the need for mentoring programs. Rep. Shreiber-Beck noted that it is too early to assess the effectiveness of initiatives such as loan repayments and scholarships in encouraging individuals to enter the field of education. Maria Neset suggested Dr. Shockley look at collecting data related to the effectiveness of those initiatives. The conversation also touched on teacher salaries and benefits, with considerations about the possibility of implementing a statewide contract or salary schedule. However, the discussion leaned towards the recognition of total compensation, including both tangible and intangible benefits, rather than solely focusing on salary. There was additional discussion about the role of the state versus local districts in addressing recruitment and retention challenges, with considerations for different needs in various regions, such as housing affordability and childcare assistance.

Chair Schaefer emphasized the need for improved public perception of the teaching profession. Discussion was held on the consideration of a statewide marketing campaign to attract more individuals to the profession. They noted the need to promote the value of public education and discussed how to highlight the impact that teachers and public education have on the community. They noted community-driven political narratives that drive a negative image of public education and discussed how to address that issue using personal stories from families.

- **Possible K12 Council Recommendation:** Statewide marketing campaign

Maria Neset stated her support for an effort to start a statewide marketing campaign.

Chair Shaefer proposed an ad hoc subcommittee that would focus on ideas to address how to raise a public marketing campaign for how ND appreciates education. He encouraged members to consider if they are willing to be part of that ad hoc committee and reach out to Kayla Effertz Kleven if they want to serve on that subcommittee. Chair Schaefer stated that once there are enough participants, he would form that ad hoc committee to present recommendations at the next Full Council meeting.

3. Legislative Update

Rep. Schreiber-Beck reported that the Policy Committee met and is looking at school choice, with detailed presentations regarding education savings accounts (ESA). She stated no bills have been proposed at this time.

School Choice Discussion

Chair Schaefer opened up the discussion about school choice to the full group as a timely topic and suggested addressing potential impacts on the education system in North Dakota.

Brandt Dick mentioned that NDCEL is meeting on this subject and may bring a bill to be sponsored.

Rep. Schreiber-Beck expressed concern that school choice is a political move, and not realistic. She noted that her research indicates positive and negative aspects and an overall lack of solid data supporting the effectiveness of various school choice methods. She also expressed concerns about public funding supporting ideologies.

Brandt Dick mentioned the need to consider the different options of school choice in rural areas

versus bigger cities because there are not many options for special services or private schools.

Senator Braunberger expressed agreement regarding concerns about funding ideology. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of ensuring that school choice policies do not create disparities or favor students from wealthier backgrounds. He advocated for prioritizing assistance to students needing additional educational support, such as those with dyslexia, rather than solely benefiting those who already have the means to access specialized education.

Chair Schaefer highlighted the importance of considering statewide policy discussion that govern the entire state, rather than specific areas, noting that municipal governments are responsible for governing local pockets and addressing specific community needs.

Jennifer Weber stated that accountability should also be part of the discussion. Chair Schaefer agreed.

Rep. Schreiber-Beck questioned the applicability of legal precedents from other states and how they relate to legality based on the North Dakota Constitution. She stated that the issue has not been challenged here in ND, leaving the matter legally unresolved.

4. Committee Reports

a. Executive Committee

Chair Schaefer reported that there were no responses received for the request for proposal (RFP) for the Executive Director position. He explained that the committee is exploring alternative procurement options. He stated that the Executive Committee will continue to meet to address this issue, and he will update the Council members.

Chair Schaefer expressed gratitude to Kayla Effertz Kleven for her contributions and commitment to this Council and for helping establish the Council's operations, procedures, practices and setting the direction to move forward successfully.

b. Duplication & Replication Subcommittee

Brandt Dick reported that efforts were made to collect data on non-certified staff in schools. He explained that Ellie Shockley communicated with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), resulting in DPI agreeing to collect data on unfilled positions for various non-certified roles such as paraprofessionals, bus drivers, cooks, and aides starting in the fall.

Kayla Effertz Kleven explained that the Support and Innovation Subcommittee's work was addressing cybersecurity concerns, how to provide professional development and services for schools, and the effects of technology on students. Concurrently, the Duplication and Replication Subcommittee was examining data on non-licensed staff and retention trends, and the next step was to find commonalities and successes. There was a recognition that the subcommittees needed to realign their focus and swap work to better achieve their scope of work missions. It was proposed that the Innovation and Support Subcommittee should focus on identifying pockets of success and best practices based on the data collected on school personnel retention, and the Duplication and Replication Subcommittee should analyze potential areas of smart and inefficient duplication in cybersecurity.

A group discussion was held regarding cybersecurity duplication. Wayde Sick spoke about his previous experience with the evaluation of possible duplication with virtual CTE

centers and the Center of Distance Education. Chair Schaefer emphasized the goal of preparing students for tomorrow's workforce, to ensure they are adequately equipped with cybersecurity skills and proficient in computer science, considering the importance of these areas in the job market. He highlighted the extensive efforts being made across schools, and various agencies to advance cybersecurity education and integrate computer science into curricula, but acknowledged there may be areas where duplication or inefficiency exists. There was a general consensus of Council members that the Duplication and Replication subcommittee should move forward to evaluate this at a deeper level.

c. Aspirational Goals Subcommittee

Ellie Shockley reviewed the six Long-term Strategic Goals and gave an overview of each.

Goal 1: She noted that this goal is not quantifiable at this time, and does not have a dashboard.

Goal 2: She demonstrated how the dashboard allows users to see actual values compared to goals, making it easier to track progress effectively.

Goal 3: She explained that this metric measures students who achieve proficient or advanced scores on NDSA tests or who show improvement from novice to partially proficient between consecutive testing administrations. She demonstrated the ELA and Math data points on the dashboard, showing modest growth toward the goal.

Goal 4: She discussed the goal of increasing student engagement in learning, which is based on the behavioral engagement facet of the student engagement survey. She explained that a metric was developed to quantify engagement, with one point awarded for compliant behavior and two points for committed engagement. She noted that the data for this metric has been somewhat erratic.

Goal 5: She stated that this goal is going well. She noted that, unlike other goals, this goal extends to the 2029-2030 school year. She expressed satisfaction with the current progress and anticipated new results in late summer or early fall.

Goal 6: She noted that this is a complex goal with multiple facets and explained that the graph showcases performance in English Language Arts (ELA) and math of different student groups, including students with disabilities, those from low incomes, and Native American students.

Brandt Dick asked how the data on the graphs may change when the test changes for state accountability. Ellie Shockley highlighted ongoing discussions and efforts to calibrate Pearson measures to state standards, aiming for consistency despite changes in vendors. She acknowledged potential measurement errors due to the vendor switch but emphasized the necessity of moving forward and making the new system work.

Chair Schaefer highlighted the ease of quantifying and presenting the data to legislators and the public. He noted that the Council's job is to evaluate the data, not to come up with ideas for addressing the results, but the Council will be able to further the discussion by sharing the results.

Superintendent Baesler emphasized that reading is the identified priority at this time, not English Language Arts (ELA). She highlighted the importance of clear communication about this priority to lawmakers, the public, and education stakeholders.

The subcommittee discussed the aim to operationalize Goal 3 and evaluate the recommendation annually. Ellie Shockley suggested updating the language to ensure it doesn't imply a one-time action. Chair Schaefer suggested changing the language to state that the K12 Coordination Council will review annually. Superintendent Baesler and the group agreed to make the adjustment to the language.

Chair Schaefer asked the group for consensus for this report to go live. It was discussed and recommended for communication to go out to explain the goals and the graphs as this report goes live. Superintendent Baesler agreed that the Aspirational Goals subcommittee would develop that communication.

Jared Bollom moved to take this dashboard live once communication is prepared. Jeremy Mehlhoff seconded.

Discussion: Jared Bollom raised a question about annotating changes in the test platform to indicate a shift in the process. Ellie Shockley agreed and suggested including a note specifying the transition period when the method changed, indicating which tool was used in which years. The group agreed with the idea of adding an explanation to clarify any differences in measurement tools over time.

The motion passed unanimously.

5. Timeline for Recommendations

Kayla Effertz Kleven discussed the importance of wrapping up subcommittee work by June, including having draft recommendations ready. She urged specificity in recommendations, especially regarding appropriations. Chair Schaefer reminded members of the Council's role in making recommendations rather than laws and encouraged dedication to finish subcommittee work before summer to ensure a smooth transition with Kayla's departure and the arrival of a new executive director.

6. Timely Topics

Bonds:

Sonia Meehl provided an update on her district's recent unsuccessful bond referendum vote, seeking \$14.84 million for infrastructure improvements. Despite the rejection, she expressed hope for future attempts, noting similar challenges faced by other districts. She highlighted vast differences in taxable valuation among districts, emphasizing the challenge of finding solutions due to differences in districts.

Jeremy Mehlhoff noted the disconnect between supporting schools in rhetoric versus funding, reflecting on the challenges of garnering community support for education funding. He mentioned that people's property tax concerns overshadowed the infrastructure needs. He also discussed the importance of fostering a positive image of education, both at the state and community levels, and how image ties into multiple issues the state is facing regarding teacher recruitment and retention as well as community support for education buildings.

Alexis Baxley discussed ongoing work related to a potential property tax measure. She noted that a subgroup is meeting with legislators to explore ideas for reducing property taxes and highlighted the link between tax relief and community support for initiatives like building schools. She noted that discussions on relief are still exploratory, but they offer new avenues for addressing disparities in property tax burdens across different areas.

Further group discussion was held about what legislators could do to set standards for school improvements, how to utilize legacy funding for school buildings, the public image of state spending, and the need to find a way that is more equitable for taxable valuation to be determined on properties in school districts across the state.

The meeting adjourned at 3:55 pm.

Next Full Council Meeting: September 10, 2024 - Capitol Bldg., 15th Floor CTE Conference Room

Minutes taken and prepared by Shauna Marchus

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:

Chairman Luke Schaefer

Date